

Governor Lines

As this academic year draws to a close, it is time to update you on what has happened at the last three Governors' Meetings.

1. Membership

Stephen Taylor has joined the Governors as a new Staff Governor. He replaces Fiona Hardcastle who stepped down upon her retirement from the Academy in December.

2. Report from Malcolm Willis on behalf of the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC)

In his very positive report on the progress of the Academy, he highlighted the significant improvement in behaviour, the quality of support given to our students, the Senior Leadership Team working as a coherent unit, the good use to which student data is being used and the improved way in which the Governors hold the Academy to account.

3. Pupil Premium Update

The Governors are required to monitor closely the way in which this funding is used. A detailed presentation was given to Governors by Mr Ryan-Youett who has recently taken up responsibility for this area.

He informed the Governors of the outcomes of his review of current practice and ways in which he planned to develop the work in the coming year. He is working closely with the SENCO to ensure the best possible provision.

Governors will continue to monitor this area in the coming year.

4. School Boiler Project – Early end to the term proposal

Ms Broderstad updated the Governors on the progress of this project. She reported that with the amount of work that needed to be done, the contractors had informed her that it would not be possible to guarantee re-opening on September 1st.

After considerable questioning of Ms Broderstad, it was agreed that the Academy should close a week early in July. The Governors' view was that it was vital that the Academy was ready to operate as normal from September 1st.

5. Behaviour Policy

As the new Behaviour Policy had been in operation for nearly twelve months, the Governors took the opportunity to reflect on its progress.

Their view from the evidence provided to them, from their own observations around the Academy and contact with students and Parents and Carers is that the policy has made a significant positive difference to the Academy.

Students report that they can now learn in a positive environment in the classroom. Those students seeking to disrupt learning are dealt with swiftly allowing the rest of the class to get on with their work.

As expected the number of Isolations and Fixed Term exclusions rose in the early days but both have now reduced significantly. The staff are constantly tweaking the system in the light of their experience to seek to ensure that the number of occasions students are removed from their class continues to reduce.

To this end, the academy has employed new Pastoral Assistants who will be working more closely with the small minority of students who are not complying or coping with the current system.

6. Excalibur Trust

Sadly, the Governors still cannot report a successful conclusion in their efforts to join the Excalibur Multi Academy Trust. The delay is down to extremely slow progress on funding agreements with the DfE. Dorcan Academy has done all it can to facilitate this happening.

However, despite this delay, Excalibur Trust have continued to work successfully with Dorcan on School Improvement.

7. Academy Budget

As with the vast majority of Academies and Schools across the country, Dorcan is finding it increasingly difficult to fund all that we would want to do. Each year is a real challenge. The Governors have approved a Budget for the coming year that will leave us with a very small surplus to roll over to the following year.

In order to avoid a deficit budget, some very tough decisions have had to be made. Again, it was with great reluctance that the Governors supported the plans submitted by the Head. They recognised that the Head had no other choice available to her.

8. Change to the School Day

The Government continues to raise its levels of expectations of what academies should provide for our students. In order to meet these expectations, it was felt necessary to add fifteen minutes to the School Day to facilitate extra work on improving the Literacy of our students.

Having listened to the rationale, the Governors fully supported the proposal especially as consultation with students and parents / carers had been positive.

9. The School Development Plan

This document outlines how the Academy aims to develop in the next year. This year's plan has two key areas of focus:

- a. To encourage students to be Independent Learners – this will include looking at the well – being of all our students.
- b. To raise standards of Oracy and Literacy in all subjects to ensure students are word rich

10. Book Scrutiny

A number of Governors have visited departments to observe whether the Academy policies on marking are being followed. They reported positively on this area.

11. Governor Priorities for 2018 – 19

The Governors agreed on the following:

- a. To complete the process of joining a MAT
- b. To ensure that they are prepared for Ofsted
- c. To continue to develop their monitoring of the performance of the Academy through Governor Visits.

12. Other Matters

- a. **Disciplinary Committee** – oversees Behaviour and deals with Permanent Exclusions. They continue to challenge the support that the LA provides for our students.
- b. **Safeguarding** – this is very carefully monitored. Following inspections, Dorcan is rated very highly in this area.
- c. **Data** – this committee monitors the performance of the Academy from the Data provided and brings any concerns to the Full Governors. Their role is to challenge performance.
- d. **Attendance** – at each meeting this is reported on. After a mid – year dip, this area has improved. This has been aided by spending on employing staff to phone parents / carers if a child is not present. Governors remind parents / carers that it is their legal responsibility to inform the academy if their child is absent.

At the end of another challenging year, the Governors are pleased to note the continued improvement in the performance of the Academy. The Governors appreciate the amazing amount of work that the Head and Staff put in to seeking to provide the best possible education for each of our students.

Hopefully many of you have seen on Facebook pictures of many examples of the incredible extra – curricular activities that take place in the Academy.

In addition, the Governors would like to thank the parents and carers for their support. If all of us work together, each of our students will achieve the best possible outcomes.

We believe that Dorcan is truly “an Academy of Opportunity”.

May I wish you all a good Summer Break, and for those parents / carers whose children will be returning here in September, we look forward to working with you in the coming year.

Best wishes

Phil Baker
Chair of Governors